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January 15, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: **DPSS RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE ON REVIEW AND EVALUATION
OF CalWORKs (CORE) REPORT ON DPSS SOCIAL SERVICES
DESIGNED TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO PROGRAM
PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

As requested by Supervisor Burke, in her memo dated November 18, 2003, this is to provide you with a report relative to the findings and recommendations of the Public Social Services (PSS) Commission's Committee On Review and Evaluation of CalWORKs (CORE) dated August 1, 2003. These findings and recommendations focus on mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence services for CalWORKs participants.

REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report asserts that there is a substantial gap between the needs of CalWORKs participants for Mental Health (MH), Substance Abuse (SA) and Domestic Violence (DV) services and the delivery of such services, and provides two major recommendations for the Department to undertake as follows:

- A strategy to increase the effectiveness in identification and engagement of CalWORKs participants in support services designed to overcome MH/SA/DV barriers to program participation and employment; and
- The implementation of departmental practices which will moderate the enforcement of sanctions and terminations to ensure they are applied with due recognition of the fact that many CalWORKs participants in need of supportive services have neither been identified, nor engaged in needed services.

OVERALL DPSS RESPONSE

My department believes that our efforts in the design, administration and delivery of a comprehensive supportive services program have not been adequately recognized nor acknowledged in the CORE report, and we find it undeservingly critical.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

We realize the need to continue making significant program enhancements, as we continue learning from our experience in providing specialized supportive services to CalWORKs participants. Equally important, we believe your Board should be made aware of the tremendous efforts and successes of our program. As such, in addition to providing you with a Departmental action plan to enhance delivery of supportive services, this report highlights key achievements and characteristics of the current program.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CURRENT PROGRAM

1. Collaboration

Since the inception of the supportive services program, DPSS has been cognizant that substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence issues are unresolved societal problems, not unique to the welfare population. We have also been aware that these issues, coupled with our participants' special needs, increase the challenge to provide effective services. To overcome this challenge and create a successful program, from the onset, we have extensively collaborated with various organizations within the community to develop a program that would help our participants achieve self-sufficiency by using a broad network of service provider agencies.

Our department continues its collaborative efforts with various stakeholders in reviewing, re-examining, evaluating and revising the many aspects of the supportive services program to enhance services. We chair monthly and quarterly supportive services steering committee meetings comprised of representatives from DMH, DHS and CSS, community advocates, and treatment providers, to address program issues and develop plans for enhancements. We also participate in Service Planning Area (SPA) meetings and quarterly provider meetings to discuss, address and resolve concerns that may affect the program or an individual case.

2. Screening Instrument

Our department is committed to assist Welfare-to-Work participants break the cycle of welfare dependence and attain self-sufficiency; and as cited in the CORE report, *"participants must disclose their need for services and ultimately take responsibility for the personal problems they face and engage in the use of services intended to help them."*

At the outset of the program, DPSS and representatives from various service provider agencies, DMH, DHS and CSS, UCLA and community advocates such as Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles met to develop effective screening instruments to guide DPSS staff in their discussion of supportive services issues, and encourage participant self-disclosure. To assess the effectiveness of this screening tool and explore other options of identifying supportive service needs, DPSS convened a workgroup in 2003 to re-evaluate the screening instruments. This workgroup included representatives from our three partnering departments, community and legal advocates, UCLA and other experts in the area of MH, SA and DV. A consensus was reached that the current screening instrument used

for purposes of facilitating MH and SA self-disclosure was appropriate and sufficient. However, the DV information sheet was modified to enhance its effectiveness. As one indicator of the effectiveness of these screening tools, in November 2003, 25% of the participants who attended GAIN orientation were referred for specialized supportive services.

3. Collocation

DPSS fully supports the involvement of experienced professionals in our service delivery system. We have collocated contracted treatment providers in all GAIN orientation and Job Services sites to provide information on the availability of supportive services in an environment which may be more conducive to self-disclosure than our CalWORKs district offices. This approach has facilitated seamless access to immediate services for our participants.

4. Home Interview Program (HIP)

We recognize that access to needed supportive services is one of the key factors in the participant's overall success in achieving self-sufficiency. As such, we incorporated a component in HIP to specifically address supportive services. At every CalWORKs HIP visit, the availability of supportive services is discussed with applicants. From countywide implementation of HIP in September 2001 through November 2003, 2,946 supportive services referrals were initiated through HIP.

5. Specialization

We instituted worker specialization in response to the realization that a more focused approach was needed to better serve the supportive services needs of our participants. As such, this allows us to assign participants who are in need of supportive services to specialized eligibility and GAIN services workers who primarily work with DV, MH and SA cases. Through this approach, we have been able to provide timely, quality services to participants with special needs.

6. Training

DPSS provides ongoing training to **all** staff on sensitivity issues and continues assessing training needs in various forums. Moreover, we meet quarterly with specialized Eligibility Supervisors (ES), Eligibility Workers (EW), GAIN Services Supervisors (GSS) and GAIN Services Workers (GSW) to discuss program enhancements, training needs and communication between DPSS line staff, program staff and contract providers.

7. Program Access - Los Angeles vs. other counties

Los Angeles County is the most populous and diverse county in the nation, and as such, we face unique challenges. Implementing and maintaining programs is a task

that involves much collaboration and effort. Notwithstanding these challenges, LA County provides DV, MH and SA services to a comparable share of our welfare-to-work enrollees than in the rest of California. Statewide statistics show that as of June 2003, 7.1% of the LA County welfare-to-work enrollees received specialized supportive services, as compared to the 6.7% for the remainder of the state (Attachment A). Nonetheless, we continue in our efforts to increase and enhance the delivery of specialized supportive services.

DEPARTMENTAL ACTION PLAN TO ENHANCE DELIVERY OF SPECIALIZED SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

DPSS has developed a five-point action plan to enhance the delivery of specialized supportive services:

1. Study on Sanctions

As part of the CalWORKs evaluation authorized by your Board, DPSS has contracted with the Chief Administrative Office's (CAO) Service Integration Branch (SIB) to examine sanctioned CalWORKs participants in LA County. This study will seek to determine the extent to which sanctions, instituted for the purpose of compelling welfare parents to participate in mandated activities, achieve their intended goal. In addition to examining the entire sanctioned CalWORKs population, the study will also look at the incidence of sanctions among participants previously referred to or participating in specialized supportive services. The study will commence in January 2004 and a final report to your Board will be completed by October 2004. (See Attachment B for further details.)

2. GAIN Conciliation Home Call Pilot

DPSS, in conjunction with DMH, DHS and CSS, has begun developing a Home Call pilot for participants who: 1) are or were previously engaged in a specialized supportive service; and 2) are either currently sanctioned or in jeopardy of being sanctioned for failure to participate in welfare-to-work activity. This pilot will allow for a team, comprised of a DPSS specialized GAIN services worker and a mental health, substance abuse, or domestic violence service provider representative, to visit CalWORKs participants in their homes to determine whether their non-compliance or sanction is attributed to a supportive services need. The pilot will be intended to prevent participants with supportive services needs from being sanctioned and to enable participants who have been sanctioned to cure their sanction and access needed supportive services. This pilot is targeted to commence in May 2004 in one GAIN Region. The GAIN Region will be selected based on having a large number of participants in the target population. If successful, this approach will be implemented countywide, subject to available funding. (See Attachment C for further details.)

3. Follow-up Activities by Service Providers

While a large number of participants are referred to supportive services based on an identified need, many of these participants either never commence services or

terminate services prematurely. My department is working with DMH, DHS and CSS to jointly review program policies and practices, and develop procedures and effective follow-up activities by service providers to increase the number of participants who initiate and successfully complete participation in specialized supportive services.

4. Utilization of Professional Staff

The CORE report recommends an increase in the role of professional staff within DPSS in the delivery of mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence services. The report further recommends that DPSS utilize the resources of local universities in an overall effort to strengthen the delivery of these specialized supportive services.

In response to these recommendations and subject to available funding, effective August 2004, DPSS will add up to ten (10) staff with a Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree to its supportive services team. This staff will work with DPSS GAIN staff, as well as supportive services program administration to enhance delivery of services. In conjunction with using this MSW staff, DPSS will engage a university or the Inter-University Consortium, in a consulting capacity, for assistance with training, evaluation and program modification. (See Attachment D for further details.)

5. Monitoring Effectiveness

DPSS will collaborate with our partnering departments to design a more comprehensive, consistent system to track and monitor the utilization, outcomes, and operational effectiveness of CalWORKs specialized supportive services.

I will provide you with a status report on the activities outlined in this action plan in 90 days.

BY:nm

Attachments

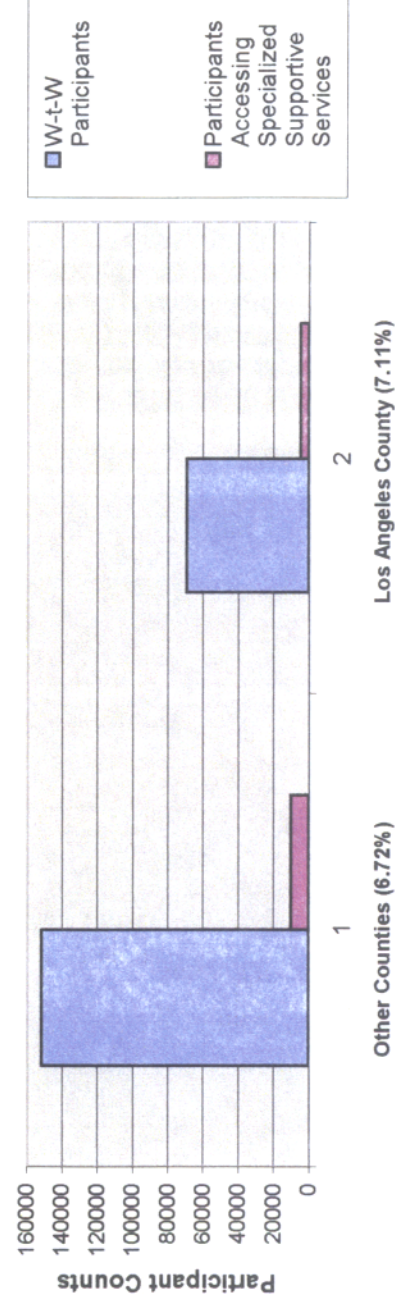
c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Chairman, Commission for Public Social Services
Director, DMH
Director, DHS
Director, CSS

ATTACHMENT A

PARTICIPANTS ACCESSING SUPPORTIVE SERVICES COMPARISON WITH OTHER COUNTIES JUNE 2003

Source: WTW 25 & 25A	All Other California Counties	Los Angeles
Welfare-to Work Enrollees	151,664	69,409
Use Mental Health Services	6,073 (4.00%)	2,952 (4.25%)
Use Substance Abuse Services	2,060 (1.36%)	475 (.69%)
Use Domestic Abuse Services	2,066 (1.36%)	1,508 (2.17%)
Total Services	10,199 (6.72%)	4,935 (7.11%)

Participants Accessing Specialized Supportive Services In Relation to
W-t-W Participants



A Study of Sanctions Among CalWORKs Participants In Los Angeles County 'Who, When, and Why'

As part of the CalWORKs evaluation, authorized by your Board, DPSS contracted with the Chief Administrative Office's (CAO) Service Integration Branch (SIB) to examine sanctioned CalWORKs participants in LA County. This study will seek to determine to what extent sanctions, instituted for the purpose of compelling welfare participants to participate in mandated activities, achieve their intended goal. The study will examine person-level factors such as participants' knowledge of the sanction process, barriers to a sanction cure, reasons why participants do not take action to cure their sanction, employment and earnings, supportive services needs and engagement. In addition, person-level information will be employed to investigate: 1) probability of being sanctioned; 2) timing of sanctions; 3) probability of curing sanction; and 4) time to cure. Program-level factors, such as level of administrative training among caseworkers, caseload ratio, and size of the program offices, will be examined to determine the extent to which sanctions may be attributed to person or program factors.

The study will address the following research questions in the following main categories:

I. Identifying the Sanctioned CalWORKs Population

- A. *What are the demographic and background characteristics of the sanctioned population? How do these differ from the non-sanctioned population?*
- B. *What are the patterns of incidence and duration of sanctions?*

II. Factors Associated with being Sanctioned

- A. *What are the common factors identified with the CalWORKs population being sanctioned?*
- B. *Do the reasons for sanction differ by the length/times participants get sanctioned?*
- C. *How are the employment opportunities of sanctioned participants affected by the number of times they are sanctioned and by the length of their sanction?*
- D. *What are the economic consequences of sanctions on participants' families?*

III. Return to Compliance among Sanctioned Participants

- A. *What factors lead sanctioned participants to return to compliance versus continue being sanctioned versus leave the CalWORKs program?*
- B. *What are the program effects or program factors associated with participants' noncompliance?*
- C. *What is the role of the need for supportive services among participants and its association with noncompliance leading to sanctions?*
- D. *What are the participants' perception of problems associated with their noncompliance?*

IV. Relations Between GAIN Office Differences and Sanction Rates

- A. *Is GAIN caseworkers training/experience related to the imposition of sanctions?*
- B. *Is GAIN caseworker training/experience related to the curing of sanctions?*
- C. *Is GAIN worker caseload related to the imposition of sanctions?*
- D. *Is GAIN worker caseload related to the curing of sanctions?*
- E. *Is GAIN office size related to sanctions?*

A CalWORKs participant survey is currently in development. The study will commence in January 2004 and a final report to the Board of Supervisors will be completed by October 2004.

GAIN CONCILIATION HOME CALL PILOT

PREMISE

A need for supportive services is a barrier to employment for some CalWORKs participants. This need may contribute to participants' inability to participate in required welfare-to-work activity, thus leading to non-compliance and sanctions.

PURPOSE

To reduce non-compliance and sanctions among participants who need specialized supportive services, a home call pilot will be conducted in one GAIN Region.

TARGET POPULATION

Participants who are or were previously engaged in specialized supportive services and who are either:

- in non-compliance with W-t-W requirements and in jeopardy of being sanctioned, or
- currently sanctioned.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Home visits will be conducted by a team, comprised of a DPSS specialized GAIN Services Worker and a professional service provider representative.

HOME CALL TEAM RESPONSIBILITY

The team will:

- visit CalWORKs participants in their homes;
- identify and resolve the reason(s) for failure or refusal to comply;
- determine whether their non-compliance or sanction is attributed to a supportive services need;
- reconnect participants to needed services in an effort to reverse the imposed sanction and alleviate barriers to employment; and
- discuss and promote benefits of employment.

NUMBER OF STAFF NEEDED

The number of staff assigned to conduct home calls will be based on the number of participants in the target population in the GAIN Region designated for this pilot. Based on preliminary data, it is anticipated that two (2) home call workers will be assigned to this pilot.

BENEFITS

- It will prevent some participants with supportive services needs from being sanctioned; and
- It will reconnect participants who have been sanctioned to the services they need, while enabling them to cure their sanctions.

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Pilot implementation is targeted for May 2004.

UTILIZATION OF CREDENTIALLED STAFF TO ENHANCE THE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

PREMISE

A cadre of staff holding a Masters in Social Work (MSW) will help DPSS enhance the CalWORKs specialized supportive services program.

NUMBER OF SPECIALIZED DPSS MSW STAFF NEEDED

Up to ten (10) MSW staff are needed, subject to available funding.

STAFF ASSIGNMENT, RESPONSIBILITY & CLASSIFICATION

One (1) supervisor with an MSW degree would:

- Be assigned to the DPSS Supportive Services Program Section;
 - Liaison with partnering departments
 - Oversee duties of MSWs assigned to each GAIN Region and the RITE agencies;
 - Collaborate with partnering departments to maximize services utilization;
 - Monitor effectiveness of procedures;
 - Conduct site visits to various regional/RITE offices;
 - Ensure quality service is provided;
 - Develop program enhancements;
 - Evaluate identification techniques;
 - Develop and administer feedback forms for participant use & compile results;
 - Provide presentations & training to various entities; and
 - Liaison with education institutions to enhance the CalWORKs specialized supportive services program.
- * ***This staff person will report to the Specialized Supportive Services Program Director.***

Nine (9) staff with an MSW would:

- Be assigned to, and collocated in, GAIN Regional offices (one for each of the seven GAIN Regions, one for the RITE agencies, and one floater assigned to the Program Section, who will cover for the others on an as-needed basis);
 - Liaison between DPSS and regional staff and contractors of the partnering departments, including Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for CalWORKs families receiving DCFS services;
 - Work closely with specialized supportive services program and line staff, and provider agencies, to ensure seamless service delivery;
 - Assist GSWs with cases receiving specialized supportive services and/or DCFS Family Preservation services;
 - Deliver training and assistance to GSWs;
 - Analyze current procedures and their effectiveness;
 - Share experiences; and
 - Provide recommendations to program staff for program enhancement.
- * ***These staff will report to the supervising MSW.***

RECRUITMENT

DPSS will work with the Department of Human Resources and the Chief Administrative Office to identify an existing appropriate county classification series for these staff.

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

Subject to available funding, implementation is targeted for August 2004, upon approval of the needed positions in the FY 2004-05 budget.